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Congress looking into link between Barbie, spy agencies

Washington (AP) — Senate and House intelligence committees have begun looking into alleged links between U.S. intelligence agencies and Nazi Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, officials on Capitol Hill said yesterday.

Justice Department officials, meantime, were weighing a recommendation that they open their own investigation into possible U.S. complicity in Mr. Barbie's escape from Europe after World War II, according to department sources who answered questions on the condition that they not be identified.

Mr. Barbie, known as "the Butcher of Lyon," was returned to France last week from Bolivia, where he had lived as a fugitive.

French authorities are preparing to retry Mr. Barbie, 69, on war crimes charges.

The defendant has been accused of responsibility for the deaths of 4,000 people and the deportation of about 7,500 others to Nazi concentration camps.

The Senate intelligence committee vice chairman, Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D, N.Y.), noted that, "since last spring, the select committee has been interested in the question of possible ties between former Nazi officials and U.S. intelligence agencies."

"Appropriate inquiries have been made at various agencies, including ... about the activities of Mr. Klaus Barbie," Mr. Moynihan said in a statement released by his office.